



Car Seat Checks



The Lumpkin County Fire/Ems currently provides child seat checks by appointment only. Please call (706) 864-9183 to schedule an appointment with our technician.

Maximum child passenger safety Guidelines

According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration research, 8,325 lives of children under age 5 have been saved by the proper use of child restraints during the past 30 years. In 2006, among children under 5, an estimated 425 lives were saved by child restraint use. Research shows that child restraints provide the best protection for all children up to age 8; after age 8 seat belts provide the best protection.

Parents and caregivers should refer to the following *4 Steps for Kids* guidelines for determining which restraint system is best suited to protect children based on age and size:

1. For the best possible protection, keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds.
2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (at least age 1 and at least 20 pounds) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall).
4. When children outgrow their booster seats, (usually at age 8 or when they are 4'9" tall) they can use the adult seat belts in the back seat, if they fit properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest).

Test your knowledge of child seat safety

What is the "best" Child Restraint System?

All Child Restraint Systems meet Federal Safety Standards. Factors to consider when selecting a child restraint device are:

- The one that fits your child
- The one that fits your car
- The one that you will use correctly every ride

How old does my child have to be before he/she can face forward in his/her car seat?

The child has to be 20 lbs. (depending on car seat manufacturer's instructions) and one-year old. Why? An infant's head is large and heavy. The neck, bones, ligaments, and muscles are not well developed. Note: You may need a new child restraint device if the top of the head is one inch away from the top of the car seat.

Can I use a second hand car seat?

Acquiring a used car seat can be dangerous. Only a seat with a known history and all its parts intact and functional should be acquired. Make sure it has not been the subject of a RECALL by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

IMPORTANT: If your car seat has been involved in a crash, it must be replaced! Most insurance companies will replace it with the same Child Restraint Device.

How do I know if I have installed my car seat correctly?

First, read the vehicle manual on seat belts and child restraint systems carefully and then the Child Restraint Manufacturer's instructions!

At the path where the seat belt passes through the Child Restraint Device, the car seat should not move more than one inch side to side or away from the seat back. If it does, try to put more weight into the car seat and have another person pull on the seat belt. If the car seat still is not tight, there may be an incompatibility issue with the car seat and your vehicle. The seat may need to be tethered and belted.

Note: Tether straps aid with incompatibility issues between vehicle seat belts and the various types of Child Restraint Devices. If your vehicle does not have a tether anchor, see a dealership near you.

How do I know if I have properly restrained my child in the Child Restraint Device?

First, is the car seat the one that best fits your child's size, weight, and physical tolerance? If yes, are the harness straps through the correct harness slots (*Recommendations vary so it is important to read Child Restraint Device manufacturer's instructions.*) Make sure the harness straps are adjusted for a snug fit so that they will limit forward motion and provide greater protection in a crash. The harness straps should not be bent, but flush over the shoulders and across the chest and upper thighs. The retainer clip should be at armpit level to prevent ejection during a crash.

Where do I place my Child Restraint Device in my vehicle?

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) suggests that all children under the age of 12 years old sit in the rear. Rear-facing car seats should be placed in the middle rear so that it is furthest from any crash point on the vehicle.

When can I take my older child out of a Belt Positioning Booster?

When the child weighs 80 or more pounds and if he/she can sit back in the intersection of the seat back and sit with his/her legs bent at the knees.

CAUTION: Air bags are considered Supplemental Restraint Systems to use with Lap/Shoulder belt systems. Read [Vehicle Warnings about Air Bags and Child Restraint Systems](#).

You can find more information regarding child passenger safety at the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's](#) web site.